

Acton boundary unchanged

By CHRIS AAGAARD
Herald Staff Writer

A regional council decision not to allow changes to the Acton urban boundary has angered Halton Hills representatives and could have serious financial implications for two Acton developers.

Despite strong support from Milton and Halton Hills members, Paul Civiero and Paul Nielson failed to convince a majority of the councillors to make minor changes to the Acton urban limits which would allow them to proceed with two housing developments along Churchill Road North. The proposal was defeated by a vote of 15-7.

Regional planning staff and most of council are reluctant to make any changes to the boundary until both parts of the Acton urban review—the first part dealing with the boundary itself and the second part concerning the capacity of Acton's sewage treatment plant—are completed.

Regional staff are concerned that allowing the Churchill Road North projects to go through will set off a "me-too" reaction from other developers in Acton who are also seeking to have their properties included in the Acton urban area.

One especially prickly case, which may eventually find itself before an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing,

concerns a Landawn Shopping Centres Ltd. (Toronto) proposal to build a shopping centre south of Highway 7, east of Churchill Road South. Town council has already quashed the idea, arguing that unless Acton undergoes a dramatic population increase, a development of that size could harm Acton's downtown core.

22 HOMES
Located on the west side of Churchill Road North above Mac Donald Boulevard and south of the Acton curling club, the 5.81 acres of land owned by Mr. Civiero is slated for a 22-unit detached home subdivision. The region has said that he can proceed with building on nineteen of the lots because they fall within the urban boundary. However, three lots and road access to the greater portion of the subdivision lie outside the urban area.

Mr. Nielson plans to develop 3.5 of 6.5 acres he owns on the opposite side of the road, between the road and the Acton and District High School. The development proposal calls for 13 single dwelling houses.

With sewer and water mains running to both the high school and the curling rink, the area is already serviced and Halton Hills planning staff, town councillors and even the ministry of housing have approved of the developments.

Speaking on behalf of both

himself and Mr. Civiero, Mr. Nielson addressed council Wednesday afternoon, arguing that the amendments being sought "basically conform to the intent of the local plan".

"My company cannot survive the financial strain of waiting for approval," he said. Mr. Nielson later told The Herald that his Cedar Road Developments is losing \$60,000 a year in mortgage payments on the property east of Churchill Road North and had already invested \$50,000 in engineering fees.

NEED DEVELOPMENT
Halton Hills Coun. Ed Wood said that Acton needs the new development to help attract industries to the area, adding that he felt it was unfair for the staff to compare the Churchill Street North housing proposals with the Landawn shopping centre proposal.

Angered that regional planning staff have worked six years to establish Acton's sewage capacity compared with zoned land within the urban boundary, Halton Hills Mayor Pete Pomeroy criticized the staff for being, he said, the missing cog in the "whole wheel" that could get the Churchill Road North developments underway.

"It brings up the whole question of the cases the (regional) planning department tries to build against every damn development in

Halton Hills," Mayor Pomeroy said. "If you don't want us to build on unusable land in the township—which is obvious infilling—where are we supposed to build?"

Regional solicitor and acting chief administrative officer Dennis Perlin said that while the local plan boundaries had originally been flexible, "there was a need to fix that boundary" because of challenges to the present urban limits from other developers.

The region has based its right to fix the boundaries on a recent court decision in Ottawa-Carleton region which allowed their plan to draw rigid urban limits, superseding those set by local plans.

Taking exception to the new-found authority in the Halton official plan he helped draft, Coun. Roy Booth said: "Everyone seems to be pulling this thing up as a zoning bylaw. An official plan is simply a guide to control growth."

Meanwhile, Coun. Huss Miller put the blame for the delay of the development plans for Churchill Road North squarely on the Burlington councillors.

"We seem to get down here after doing all our homework, only to have it accepted by everyone except Burlington," he said.

RECOMMENDS WAIT
Burlington Coun. Pat McLaughlin recommended waiting to see the results of the boundary part of the Acton urban area study. He suggested that Halton Hills examine Burlington's own situation regarding servicing new developments rather than including the Civiero-Nielson projects within the urban

limits and leaving other development proposals out. "We should check out the site for three or four months rather than 'ad hoc' the situation," he said.

Under pressure from Burlington councillors Vern Connel and Joan Allingham to fix a date when council might have some results from the Acton urban review, regional planning director Raj Mohammed said that if the study sets a sewage handling capacity forecast for Acton at 10,000 people, a recommendation concerning the Churchill Road North developments could be before council in six months.

But he said he has a "suspicion that Acton will be overcommitted" in its sewage treatment capacity under existing zoning within the urban area as it now stands. He would not guarantee that the two developments would be included in the urban area even after the review had been completed.

In a recorded vote, all councillors present at Wednesday's meeting with the exception of Halton Hills councillors, Miller, Booth, Wood, Armstrong, Mayors Pete Pomeroy and Milton's Don Gordon and Milton Coun. Bill Johnson voted to support the staff recommendation to refuse the boundary changes.

NOT CONCERNED
Contacted by The Herald Thursday, Mr. Nielson said that the region's southern councillors have "no will to understand what's going on. It proves to me that they are not concerned with Halton Hills."



HEADQUARTER SHAPES UP

The walls are virtually up on the new police station on Highway 7 in Georgetown. The station will house the district headquarters for Georgetown, Acton and Milton, as well as the

Georgetown detachment. The local detachment is presently located in an office on Mill Street.

(Herald photo)

Swim in the Dead Sea a 'unique experience'

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There were ten of us, and they stayed until closing. When we left, though, two good-looking Australian girls told them they wanted to get their pictures taken with them and all of a sudden we were good friends.

Last but not least, from my journal: "We went swimming in the Dead Sea today, or to be more to the point, we went floating in it. A unique experience, actually. One cannot possibly sink because of the high salt content. The sensation is something like floating in an inner tube without the tube wrapped around and confining you."

"The water tastes horrible and is excruciatingly painful if you get it in your eyes. The water itself is a very clear

green. The sun was hot and we spent as long as we could there because, as J.P. said, "This is the last sunshine we're going to see for awhile."

"Except for the bustards of tourists who get off and chaz'ge

down for a ten-minute float, it was a very pleasant day."

The next day, John and I left for Tel Aviv, where we were to catch a flight to Athens and then to England three days later.

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